

BOARD OF HEALTH
Minutes

July 24th, 2008

Present: Sandy Sulsky, David Ahlfeld, Alan Weiner, Ellen Pile

Staff: Epi Bodhi, Ellen Bokina

Other: Diana Stein –Select Board liaison

Meeting opened at 7:01pm

I. Review and Receive

A) Meeting of minutes from June 23rd, 2008- Accepted as amended.

II. New Business

A) Well Regulations.

The Board received the edits of the well regulations which had incorporated input from the Building Inspector as well as Planning and Conservation Directors. The Wetland committee has been sent a copy but we have not yet received input. Ms Pile would prefer to review the proposed regulations and to discuss further at a future meeting. Ms Bodhi was asked to send Mr. Ahlfeld a copy of the edits. The Board moved to table this issue to the September meeting. Unanimously passed.

Ms Stein suggested that the regulations be sent to Town Counsel for review. Ms Bodhi will follow through. Ms Pile suggests that the Board hold a public hearing before passing the Well Regulations. Mr. Ahlfeld agreed and proposed holding the public hearing at September meeting. The Board voted to accept this.

III. Old Business

A) Beaver Removal-Hop Brook area

The permit to remove beavers was picked up last week. Trapping was delayed to allow young beavers born in June to leave the nest.

B) Cell Tower

Ms Bodhi reported on her conversation with Carolyn Holstein, liaison to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Ms Holstein reported that the FTC has ruled that health considerations cannot be taken into account when citing a cell tower.

Ms Bodhi was asked to research the FTC citation as well as talk to Charlie Kaniecki at DPH and the Conway BOH to see if they have any more knowledge about this. Sandy Sulsky would also like to review the research.

C) 28 Shays Street.

Ms Bokina reported that progress had been made. Attorney Winner will file the law suit shortly. Inspection services will cite the trailer. Ms Bodhi reports that neighbors continue to have concerns and would like to appear before the BOH in August. After November 1st the town has the right to demolish the house if it is still condemnable. Given that the Board has done all it can within their jurisdiction to alleviate their concerns, the Board will ask the neighbors to give a brief presentation in September.

D) rDNA Regulations and Community Response

Richard Mudgett wrote a letter to the Editor of the Amherst Bulletin which contained many inaccuracies about the BOH and its passage of these regulations. Ms Sulsky will draft an educational letter in response. Ms Bodhi reported that letters, the regulations and registration have been sent to the colleges.

E) National Performance Standards

The Board discussed the governance tool and whether it would be useful as a planning tool. Would it be good to use this at a retreat? Ms Bodhi will find out if individual members can access the tool and, if so, she will send the link to members.

F) Tobacco Regulations

The Board discussed possible amendments to our current Tobacco Regulations. Ms. Bodhi stated that our current regulations have served us well though they need to be upgraded. Ms Pile stated that she has heard anecdotally that all Village Park properties may be made smoke free.

G) Outdoor Wood Boilers (OWB)

The comment period for the DEP regulations has ended. Ms. Pile reported on Alexandra Dawson's editorial in the newspaper. A concern is that some farmers may come to the Board of Health to apply for a variance from these regulations. Currently Amherst has a moratorium on OWBs but we are certain that at least one farmer has one. Ms. Sulsky suggested that we might want to revisit creating local regulations and suggests that the Board review our moratorium and state regulations. Members stressed the need for a review of the science behind certain specifications in the regulations such as stack height and distance requirements. Ms Pile asked about how enforceable it will be to test the opacity of smoke. The BOH agreed to revisit our current moratorium language and to decide whether we need to draft our own regulations during the meeting in August.

H) Beaver Management Plan

Ms. Pile and Ms. Bodhi will ask to be on the Conservation Commission agenda to talk about the town policy for beaver management.

I) Replacement for Alan Weiner

David Kaufman, MD has agreed to serve on the BOH and will start in September. Ms. Bodhi suggested that Ilana Schmitt MD,MPH, a pediatrician at UHS with a focus on sexually transmitted diseases may want to be a member in the future. Members thanked Dr. Weiner for his service to the BOH and the Town of Amherst. David Ahlfeld will chair the Board of Health starting in September.

IV Director's Report

A) Annual Report

Ms. Bodhi and Health Department staff are working on the FY'08 annual report. Ms. Sulsky will update the section on Health Policy and Planning.

B) Vacant Positions

Searches are underway to fill the Assistant Sanitarian position as well as the Administrative Assistant position. It has been difficult for the Department to function without these key employees.

C) MUNIS

The Town is implementing a new Permitting and Code Enforcement network database software system called MUNIS which will make it easier for those seeking permits in Amherst and should allow communication among Town departments. This transition period has required much staff time to create and learn a new way of doing business.

D) Social Justice Grant

There is one more meeting with staff who are going through the dialogue series. There will be eight sessions in total. All Health Department staff and one representative from each other department were invited. Issues discussed included gender, class and race and how these affect life expectancy as well morbidity/mortality. Barbara Love will meet with Department Heads to talk about the dialogue sessions. In early October, Department Heads and Dialogue participants will have a full day retreat to discuss possible steps that the Town of Amherst might take to help eliminate these disparities.

E) Mobile Poultry Processing Unit (MPPU)

Bramble Hill Farm is a host to the state pilot program for processing poultry. This pilot is being conducted to promote and meet a need for local poultry processing. Oversight is conducted by a flock inspector and DPH Food Protection Program inspector. The Health Department is notified of processing dates and locations.

V. Schedule Next BOH Meeting/Agenda Closing Date

A) Next meeting will be August 14th 2008. Agenda closes on August 7th.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:02

Epi Bodhi, Health Director
Approved: August 14, 2008